

[Department of the Interior](#)

# NEWS

## U.S. Department of the Interior

Office of the Secretary  
For Immediate Release:  
July 26, 2006

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### **NEWS RELEASE**

*Note to media: Director Mainella will host a conference call with credentialed reporters TODAY at 3:00pm EDT. Call-in number is (888)296-1938. Participant code is 209752.*

## **National Park Service Director Fran Mainella Announces Resignation**

**WASHINGTON** – National Park Service Director Fran Mainella, the 16th NPS director, announced that, after nearly six years of service, she will leave her position to devote more time to her family.

In her resignation letter, Mainella wrote, "Thank you, Mr. President for allowing me to serve you and the American people as the Director of the National Park Service. Thank you for your support and confidence in my ability as the first woman to serve as Director."

"Now, in my sixth year as Director, it is time for me to pursue opportunities that will allow me more time to spend with my family, including my parents and in-laws who have been having health issues. Thus, with mixed emotions, I request that my resignation be effective on a mutually agreeable date that is beneficial to the National Park Service and the Department of the Interior."

Secretary of the Interior Dirk Kempthorne applauded her strong leadership of the National Park Service.

In a letter, Kempthorne wrote to her, "You wrote history in helping to create the Great Sand Dunes and Lewis and Clark National Parks. You led the effort to get 6,000 park improvement projects started or completed. You helped create the Natural Resource Challenge that has invested more than \$450 million to protect national parks. You tripled cyclic park maintenance funding."

"Perhaps your most important contribution, one that will endure long past your tenure as Director, is your effort to foster a culture of partnership within the National Park Service. Thanks to your leadership, today virtually every national park works in partnership with state and local officials, local residents and friends of groups."



**Click on the image above for High Resolution**  
Secretary Dirk Kempthorne and National Park Service Director Fran Mainella on Godspeed Sail at the Jamestown's 400th Commemoration Commission this past June.

"Prior to your leaving, I look forward to working with you in planning and celebrating the 90th anniversary of the National Park Service. You have said that our 'National Parks are the soul of America and a gift to the world.' I agree. The 90th anniversary should launch a campaign for the National Parks to remain as havens of enjoyment, learning, recreation, and personal renewal for the next 100 years."

"You can take deep satisfaction that 96% of visitors enjoy their time in national parks. On behalf of a grateful nation, the President and me, please accept our heartfelt thanks for the energy and enthusiasm you invested in your service as Director of the National Park Service. Congratulations on a job well done. From our discussions, this is a time when your family must take priority over the demands of public service. I honor your decision."

In her letter to the President, Mainella also thanked Mrs. Bush, who serves as honorary chair of the National Park Foundation and has "demonstrated her commitment to both national parks and to children. She is helping young people discover their national parks and teaching them how to protect and enjoy them."

Mainella garnered accolades for her leadership from NPS career employees as well as conservation leaders.

"Career National Park Service employees admire Fran's love for the national parks," said Steve Martin, NPS Deputy Director. "We respect her energy, enthusiasm and commitment to our mission. We respect the decision she has made and will miss her when she leaves."

"It was a great pleasure working with Fran Mainella during all of her nearly six-year period of service," said conservationist and businessman David Rockefeller. "Fran put the welcome mat out at national parks for millions of Americans. As former Citizen Chair of the National Park Foundation, I worked very closely and happily with her."

"Fran is famous for her commitment to creating partnerships and preserving the natural and cultural resources within the national parks. She has been a terrific leader of the National Park Service, and we Americans owe Director Mainella a debt of gratitude for all she has done," said Patrick Noonan, Chairman Emeritus of The Conservation Fund.

Mainella will continue to serve as Director through the planning and celebration of the 90th anniversary of the National Park Service and through the completion of the 2006 National Park Service Management Policies and other important projects.

Before becoming the 16th Director of the National Park Service in 2001, Mainella served 12 years as Director of Florida's Division of Recreation and Parks. During her tenure, Florida State Parks were voted the best in the nation, achieving the Gold Medal Award given jointly by the National Sporting Goods Association and the National Recreation and Park Association. Before assuming her State post, she was Executive Director of the Florida Recreation and Park Association, a statewide professional organization for those working in public and private park and recreation programs and facilities. Mainella has served terms as President of both the National Recreation and Park Association (1996-97) and the National Association of State Park Directors (1997-99).

The Connecticut native obtained her Bachelor's Degree from the University of Connecticut and her Master's from Central Connecticut State College.

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Office of the Director

# United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

1849 C Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20240

July 26, 2006

Dear Mr. President:

Thank you, Mr. President, for allowing me to serve you and the American people as the Director of the National Park Service. Thank you for your support and confidence in my ability as the first woman to serve as Director. Please accept my heartfelt thanks to the First Lady who, as honorary chair of the National Park Foundation, has demonstrated her commitment to both national parks and to children. She is helping young people discover their national parks and teaching them how to protect and enjoy them.

Now, in my sixth year as Director, it is time for me to pursue opportunities that will allow me more time to spend with my family, including my parents and in-laws who have been having health issues. Thus, with mixed emotions, I request that my resignation be effective on a mutually agreeable date that is beneficial to the National Park Service and the Department of Interior.

Our nation's parks tell the story of America and the history of this country. Conceived in America, the national park concept spread around the world, transcending economics, politics, and cultural differences. National parks represent the soul of America and a gift to the world.

It has been a humbling privilege to be entrusted with leading the National Park Service in preserving and protecting America's national parks— some of the most beautiful lands, most significant sites and most treasured heritage of the nation. Our work has been based on the conviction that preservation of the parks and their enjoyment by present and future generations is one of the greatest of American undertakings.

We are now completing the 2006 National Park Service Management Policies, which builds on the wisdom and strength of the Organic Act and the knowledge of experienced field employees. The policies ensure that our treasured parks and resources are passed on to future generations in better condition than they are now.

During my time as Director, the National Park Service has continued in its role as a world leader in parks. We have achieved a 96 percent satisfaction rate from those who visit. It is our dedicated employees, partners and volunteers who make this level of success possible. As the National Park Service approaches its one-hundredth birthday, in 2016, the agency will need your continued support to carry on its essential role.

Mr. President, you requested that I focus on several key areas during my tenure: partnerships, maintenance backlog, natural resources challenge, efficient and effective government, and other areas that would benefit our national parks and the American people. We have achieved success in all of these areas and more.

The National Park Service is developing a strong and enduring partnership culture. For example, all employees are now operating under a partnership policy outlined in the Director's Order on Civic Engagement and Public Involvement. The concept of cooperative conservation and working beyond park boundaries is critical to public land management today. We are reaching out to communities, tribes, States, and the federal and private sectors in order to achieve a seamless network of parks and open spaces so that our resources are protected for future generations. One hundred years from now, as the American landscape changes and matures, the most successful conservation, the most lasting contributions to the protection, use, and enjoyment of our parks, will be those accomplished through partnerships and through cooperative conservation.

As a result of an enhanced partnership culture and, for the first time ever, the creation of an Associate Director for Partnerships, Interpretation and Education, Volunteers and Outdoor Recreation, the number of volunteers, friends groups and other partnerships has increased substantially. Park philanthropy, which began under the first Director, Stephen Mather, has been encouraged by our revised Director's Order on Donations and Fundraising. An example of our approach to partnerships and philanthropy is evidenced by Lawrence Rockefeller's generous donation of the JY Ranch to Grand Teton National Park.

The relationship the National Park Service enjoys with the National Park Foundation is its best ever. We are working together on projects such as an improved Junior Ranger Program, a new Web Ranger program and a recent Electronic Field Trip to Carlsbad Caverns National Park that allowed 37 million children to visit and learn about the cave from wherever they were – across the country and internationally. These innovations will help national parks remain relevant.

With your leadership and commitment, the National Park Service committed to spending \$4.9 billion on the maintenance backlog. To date, we have accomplished more than 6000 projects and by the end of 2006, the Service will surpass this goal. We have a system in place, for the first time in our history, to track and monitor facilities, their location, their condition, and their future maintenance requirements. I am proud that we have more than tripled our cyclic maintenance funding, which will help us avoid these problems in coming years. Your continued attention to this area is very important.

You asked me to continue the Natural Resource Challenge. I am proud of the work we have done in the field of natural resource management. Congress's and your commitment to funding the National Park Service's science program have paved a path for the success of future managers. An example of this achievement is work to restore Everglades National Park, in particular through the Modified Water Recovery Project. Without the science and technical understanding of the natural environment, it is

impossible to protect the parks. Like so much of the work that we have accomplished, we have not done it alone. The Natural Resource Challenge's network of colleges, partners and States strengthens the ability to meet challenges and manage resources with sound science.

Through our preservation and restoration efforts, the sites that hold America's history—the story of who we are as a people—are in better condition. Through your new initiative *Preserve America* and the continuation of *Save America's Treasures* and *Vanishing Treasures*, the National Park Service preserves the history and the stories of America. These efforts also preserve today's living cultural sites. We have worked closely with Native American tribes to facilitate the repatriation of human remains and cultural objects to the appropriate tribes. As Director, I emphasized the importance of our cultural heritage. I am very proud of the initiatives we have developed and implemented to protect our cultural resources. Through these resources, future generations will be able to learn about, understand and celebrate their heritage.

America's people will be healthier in body and mind as a result of our efforts. Protection of NPS areas and maintenance of facilities ensures public access to enjoy these benefits. Your *Healthier US Initiative* is demonstrated in parks—the National Park System Advisory Board is working with us in this effort. During the last six years we have established new hiking, biking and canoeing trails and added six new units of the National Park System, giving the American people even more opportunity to experience their parks and improve their health with exercise.

I have had the opportunity to lead the National Park Service and serve the country during some difficult and trying times. Shortly after I was appointed, the tragic events of September 11th shook the nation. I was able to participate in the response to, and remembrance of, this tragic moment in American history. The parks, including the new national memorial to commemorate Flight 93, will help the country to remember, heal, and become a stronger nation drawn from awareness of these events. The first ever Associate Director for Visitor and Resource Protection was created in 2002 to provide resources to the parks in critical areas of security, safety, and emergency planning and preparation.

As they do with all emergencies, the men and women of the National Park Service rallied to New Orleans and the Gulf Coast as Katrina and other storms caused havoc. We were there, with many others, to help with the rescue and the rebuilding. I have seen that the people of the parks give of themselves every day—it has been an inspiration to lead them.

Mr. President, you asked me to see that park operations are efficient and effective. We have made great strides, using concepts such as core operations analysis, park scorecards and business planning. To provide day-to-day leadership in this area, I have created two new senior executive service positions, Assistant Director for Business Services and Assistant Director for Human Capital. Our communications have been enhanced through the creation of an internal messaging system called "Inside NPS", which goes to all employees, and "NPS Digest" which goes to our partners. NPS.gov is one of the most

visited Federal websites, averaging more than one million hits per day. We have increased our economic benefit to this country, during my tenure, by more than \$1 billion annually. The National Park Service brings a \$12 billion economic benefit to the nation, realized in communities across the country.

The work of the National Park Service is complex, far-reaching and of ever-increasing value. Seeing the parks from the chair of the director, I understand how significant the day-to-day work is to the legacy of this country. We must continue to support, fund, and use parks in a manner that ensures that they are protected for present and future generations. As a citizen, I will continue to be dedicated to these efforts.

Thank you again for allowing me to serve. I also thank Secretaries Norton and Kempthorne for their service to our national parks and for their commitment to the importance of the National Park Service mission. I deeply appreciate their endorsement of my belief that when there is a conflict between conservation and use, conservation is predominant. This philosophy ensures that parks will be protected and enjoyed by present and future generations. I extend my greatest thanks to all of our employees, my leadership team, partners, volunteers, Congress, and to you, Mr. President, for supporting our great National Park System.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Fran P. Mainella". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Fran P. Mainella  
Director

CC: Secretary Kempthorne



# United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

1849 C Street, N.W.

Washington, D.C. 20240

Office of the Director

July 26, 2006

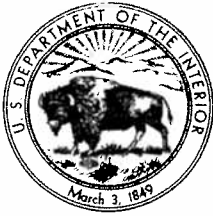
Dear Secretary Kempthorne:

Thank you for your support of National Parks, our management policies and me. I regret I will not be able to work with you longer. My letter to the President with my resignation is attached.

Please know I stand ready to assist you in the future in whatever way is beneficial. The National Parks need your support. Your ideas for 2016 are exciting and would help the parks now and into the next 100 years.

Best wishes,

Fran P. Mainella  
Director



THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR  
WASHINGTON  
July 26, 2006

The Honorable Fran Mainella  
Director, National Park Service  
1849 C Street NW  
Washington, D. C. 20049

Dear Fran:

Under your nearly six years of leadership, the National Parks have prospered. You wrote history in helping to create the Great Sand Dunes and Lewis and Clark National Parks. You led the effort to get 6,000 park improvement projects started or completed. You helped create the Natural Resource Challenge that has invested more than \$450 million to protect national parks. You tripled cyclic park maintenance funding.

Perhaps your most important contribution, one that will endure long past your tenure as Director, is your effort to foster a culture of partnership within the National Park Service. You saw the value of these partnerships as director of Florida State Parks, and you brought this belief with you when you became the Director of the National Park Service. Thanks to your leadership, today virtually every national park works in partnership with state and local officials, local residents and friends groups.

Prior to your leaving, I look forward to working with you in planning and celebrating the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the National Park Service. You have said that our "National Parks are the soul of America and a gift to the world." I agree. The 90th anniversary should launch a campaign for the National Parks to remain as havens of enjoyment, learning, recreation and personal renewal for the next 100 years.

For now, you should take deep satisfaction that 96% of visitors enjoy their time in national parks. On behalf of a grateful nation, the President and me, please accept our heartfelt thanks for the energy and enthusiasm you invested in your service as Director of the National Park Service. Congratulations on a job well done. From our discussions, this is a time when your family must take priority over the demands of public service. I honor your decision.

Sincerely,

DIRK KEMPTHORNE